PRESS CAPITULATES TO UNUSUAL NEWS APPEAL

Commonwealth Widely Discussed: Interesting Errors Appear

Commonwealth College has been unable to keep track of the deluge of articles which have appeared in the daily press and elsewhere, but inquiries received indicate that "Upton Sinclair" on the unusual aspects of the school has been syndicated by some enterprising journalist to dailies in Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma and even Nebraska, West Virginia, Georgia and other distant states.

Articles by members of the Commonwealth staff have appeared recently in The Railway Conductor, The Labor Age, and The Labor World of Montreal.

Commonwealth has entered its third year and has not yet campaigned for a million dollar stadium or athletic funds. The O'Collegian, published by the students of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, comments with surprise in discussing the labor college.

Some of the Commonwealth articles are copied and recopied several times and acquire picturesque and even flattering embellishments in the process. Commonwealth warns its friends to accept reports which do not emanate directly from the College with the necessary salt. Thus Commonwealth does not prohibit the fox-trot, as one paper reported. Nor do its resources yet enable it to operate a saw-mill or a garment factory. Kate O'Hare is field director and a trustee of the College but she does not occupy the chair of psychology. And Upton Sinclair, alas, is not United States Senator from North Dakota!

NEW ORLEANS UNION SENDING YOUTH TO COMMONWEALTH

The Marine Transport Workers Union of the Port of New Orleans has sent one of its members, Vaughan Chorian, to study at Commonwealth College. The student was accepted by the College, arrived early in January, and took up class work for the second semester.

Vaughan is a 21-year old seafaring youth, native born of Armenian parents. He has educational training which enabled him to enter directly the collegiate department, where he is taking economics, psychology, labor journalism, and public speaking.

"The intention of our union in sending the student to Commonwealth," writes the secretary of the Marine Transport Workers, "is to give him general educational training to widen his horizon and develop his ability for future organization work."

New Teacher Outlines View of Commonwealth

By ALICE HANSON
Instructor in Public Speaking, Commonwealth College.

Visitors and newcomers frequently register surprise at aspects of campus life at Commonwealth which the initiated have come to notice, psychology of course. Thinking that a picture of the school from the fresh point of view of a recent arrival would be of interest to friends on the outside, the editor asked Alice Hanson, new instructor in public speaking, to outline her first impressions.

On the fifth day after my arrival I am attempting to set down my impressions. They must almost of necessity be disorderly. So complete a change of outlook and program as would follow a move from charity organization work to a labor school can not at once produce coherence.

Commonwealth seems most alive in its relationships—individual with individual. I can only hope to vivify a few of these relationships, though a surprising number have made themselves felt even in so short a time.

The plainsman is first impressed by Commonwealth's choice of location. The campus is capped in by mellow mountains; the sun strikes us late and leaves us early. Thus the students who run around the "loop" before daybreak on one excuse or another, usually that of reducing, must pause more for beauty than for breath when the early sun tinges and reddens miles of hillside trees. The cooks stirring the evening sweet potatoes may leave their industrial work with mountain sunsets. Quick trips to the wood pile, library, or the spring after dark are apt

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ORATORICAL CHAMPION JOINS COLLEGE STAFF

Alice Hanson Has Unusual Record As Speaker and Social Worker

A new teacher, Alice Hanson, Northwestern University champion orator and St. Louis social worker, joined the Commonwealth College faculty as instructor in public speaking at the beginning of the second semester.

Alice Hanson's twenty-two years have been packed with experience and achievement. Her origin is distinctly bourgeois. She studied at Northwestern University and distinguished herself many times in oration. She became vice president of the Epworth League of the Methodist Episcopal Church, North. While in church work she became interested in the outlawry of war and was a leader of the pacifist group at Northwestern which evoked such a furor two years ago.

Although her connection with the "38 pacifists" made her persona non grata with the university authorities, she won a large part of the prizes offered to members of her graduating class—in fact, all the awards for which she was eligible. These included the Piuskeim, Bob, Kappa, Delta, Oratorical League, and extemporaneous speaking prizes, and the award for first honors for four years in public speaking.

After graduation she spent 15 months in social work, mainly as a family visitor for the St. Louis Provident Association.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT HELPS TO SPEED SCHOOL'S WORK

The donation of an Underwood typewriter and the loan of a mimeograph to Commonwealth College places much-needed equipment at the disposal of the office department.

The typewriter is the gift of O. O. Wagner Sr., whose son is attending Commonwealth. Mr. Wagner is a union railroad telegrapher. The mimeograph was loaned to the College for six months by Local Kansas City of the Socialist Party.

He is to be educated because he is a man, and not because he is to make shoes, nails, and pins.—Channing.

The donation of an Underwood type-
What is Commonwealth College?

Commonwealth was organized in 1925 to provide education for workers on a self-supporting basis. Commonwealth is located in the Ozark-
near Meno, Ark., where it operates agricul-
tural and other basic industries by means of
four-hour daily labor from its students.

Commonwealth seeks to develop in young
men and women of the working class the
capacity to serve the labor movement.

Commonwealth is a non-sectarian, non-
propaganda institution. It sponsors no par-
ricular religions, political, or economic doc-
ma. Its workshop experience carries the
only hope of adjustment or solution of personal and social problems.

Commonwealth is the only institution for
higher education where both teachers and
students earn their maintenance by part-
time labor while engaged in academic work.

Respectfully Submitted

It is a pleasure to announce that the Commonwealth College Fortnightly, precocious younger, has rapidly
passed through the trying short-pants stage and with this issue assumes adult
status. This appearance in printed
form leaves the Fortnightly no more
worlds to conquer; for it expressly
denies to entertain that praiseworthy ambition of every monthly trades-
assembly organ—to become a gigantic
daily. Such an ambition would involve
masses of duplication of effort for the
already possesses one such daily.

Thus deprived of further worlds to
conquer, the Fortnightly performs
turns its attention to setting in order
the sphere which is peculiarly its own.
It will continue to set forth the humble
annals of Commonwealth, and will at-
tempt to keep a favorable impression of
the many-sided life of the school.

In addition it will from time to time
publish signed articles of a general na-
ture. Articles will be printed for their
vitality and interest rather than as re-
presenting any particular point of view;
for this is only slightly apparent in an
open forum for pertinent discussion
rather than a journal of opinion. The
Fortnightly will make no attempt to
conform to a consistent editorial pol-
icy; for the school which it represents
exists to stimulate thought, not to pre-
vent thought. Responsibility for
opinions expressed in signed articles
will, of course, rest solely with the
writers.

Several new features are begun in
this issue, or will be forthcoming short-
ly. Among these are a series of short
articles on problems of workers' educa-
tion, sketches of Commonwealth teach-
ers and students, book reviews, and a
correspondence section.

Criticism, both constructive and de-
structive, will be welcomed, as will
comment on the ideas presented in
these columns. A dollar bill for a
year's subscription, if included with
communications, will make them doubly
acceptable.

"Golden Rule" Nash Accepts The Union

"Golden Rule" Nash has made his
shop unionize. The essence of the
method in the latest victory for organ-
zized labor is in that statement.

The paternalistic Cincinnati clothing
manufacturer won his title at his own
request for it. For years he has spent
his time in addressing Rotary Clubs
and Sunday evening clubs on the
money value of the golden rule. Unlike
the usual Christian, he seemed to prac-
tice his religion most of the week and
deny it on Sundays—or, we might say,
on speaking days. Nash, for instance,
addressing a national convention in
Cincinnati, said: "Here I looked like a
brother to his workers in his
scrupulously white linen suit, de-
signed to heighten the effect easily
earned by his crown—one almost
say halo—of white hair.

No one could very well doubt his
sincerity in feeling that his system of
"treatment" of the workers was. If we
like to be treated had been successful.
But many doubted his sincerity when
he said that he had introduced im-
proved working conditions with the
worker in mind rather than the profits
which would accrue.

Now the amazing thing has taken
place. The labor world wakes up to
find that Nash, the paragon of pater-
nalism, has apparently forsaken the
beaten path he had trod from the
Rotary of Portland, Me., to the Kiwanis
of Portland, Ore. Indeed he has walked
deliberately off the path into the arms
of labor. So far as the public can see,
he has returned the embrace with real
fervor and affection.

But before capitulating entirely to
this genial Christian gentleman, we
should permit ourselves the right to
ask two questions: Did Nash bring the
Amalgamated to his workers?

The answer lies with the
farmers. From the Lakes to the Gulf
and from the Appalachians to the Rockies
the rural wrath is rising.

The deplorable condition of
the farmers derives from the defects of our
monetary and banking systems. Our
government financed the late war for
democracy by an inflation of the cir-
culating media rather than by taxation of
current incomes. The Federal Re-
serve Board and the Federal Reserve
System were pliant and willing instru-
ments for such a scheme of war fi-
nance. Great quantities of Federal Re-
serve notes were printed, the circulation
and an abundance of bank credit was
made available to the borrowing pub-
lic. Prices rose rapidly.

The farmers experienced great pros-
perity. Their products were in great
demand at high prices. They were
able to pay off old debts with cheap
money. Instead of storing at this
point, however, they very unwillingly
contracted new debts by purchasing
more land, putting up better buildings,
and buying new and improved equip-
ment. They thought that good mar-
kets and high prices were going to be
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Society Notes

- A regulation tennis court will soon take its place along with Mill Creek and the College commons as a social center, thanks to the voluntary labor of students and teachers. Commoners have few idle hours but they are finding time occasionally to cut timber, grub stumps, and pack and level earth on the court site.

The addition of two Holstein-Jersey cows to the Commonwealth dairy has trebled the milk supply of the school. The new cows are four-gallon creatures, in glaring contrast to the brace of indigenous two-gallon beasts which have hitherto constituted the dairy herd.

Temperance in speech was appreciably promoted among the kitchen workers by the recent installation of a new hotel range, which displaces two authentic antiques. Any sympathizer desiring to acquire a memento of Commonwealth’s early struggles may obtain either or both of the old stoves at a nominal price.

The new piece of economic substructure measures six by three feet and weighs 1280 pounds. Two ovens and a water heater enable Commonwealth to bake all its own bread and to wash its dishes in short order.

Farm Subsidy

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permanent. Such is the psychology of prosperity.

Then in April, 1920, the bubble broke. Markets disappeared and credits were cut off at the banks. The farmers found themselves with large debts, with an overdevelopment of agricultural activities, and with crops of too little value to meet maturing obligations. This general situation has continued from April, 1920, to the present.

The rural bankers, who had been taught up in the prosperity hysteria, found themselves holding billions in farm paper when the slump came. They have tried to save themselves by successive extensions of time to their farm debtors. In some cases the rural banks found themselves too involved and have closed their doors. The portfolios of most country banks are loaded with farm paper that they have been carrying since 1920. Consequently we find the country bankers allied with the farmers in an effort to better agricultural conditions. Every blow to the farmers is a blow at their own stability. The rural bankers and the farmers must seek aid together or sink separately.

Measure after measure has been introduced in Congress in an effort to help the agricultural interests. Thus far the manufacturing and financial interests of the East have decried all such efforts as paternalistic or socialist and as bad economics. In the light of history their attitude is interesting.

A little more than a century ago the manufacturing interests of this country appealed to Congress for protection on the ground that they were "infants" and needed encouragement. They got it, and ever since the people of this country have been reaching down into their pockets and subsidizing manufacturing in the United States. Now agriculture has fallen on evil days and asks Congress to do for it what it has done for manufacturing for the past hundred years. They do not ask aid because agriculture is in its infancy but because it is economically ill.

Is agriculture and all that it means to the United States worth subsidizing through a valorization (price-setting) by the government of the chief agricultural crops? A tariff on farm products would aid wherever our farm products are subject to foreign competition. But to make such a tariff effective the farmers would need to market their crops collectively. Otherwise the domestic producers would lower the domestic price by cut-throat competition brought about by domestic overproduction. A government agency for the foreign marketing of our surplus agricultural products would be effective only in the case of such crops as could be stored and marketed gradually over a period of time—in some cases over a period of years. Even then such a method of handling our surplus would be effective only so long as there was not a continuous world overproduction of staple farm crops. In the latter event no amount of valorization could solve the problem of falling farm prices.

If the farmers could scale down their debts in proportion to the fall in the price level they might be able to muddle through without aid, but that is impossible. If the farmers could reduce their numbers and the acreage of staple crops so as to reduce output, those who remained in agriculture might survive the slump unaided. But how are we to accomplish such a reduction and what effect would it have upon national well-being in the long run?

In times of distress the most pronounced opponents of governmental interference in business will send up the hue and cry for governmental aid. The manufacturers did it over a hundred years ago and have been subsidized ever since. The railroads did it and got large government grants and subsidies. We have justified such governmental action on the ground of national welfare. Is there any better or greater national asset than a prosperous countryside? Is it not about time that we as a nation face that fact and subsidize agriculture to such extent as is necessary?

The farmers should keep on raising hell until they receive the consideration due them as a national asset.

W. E. Z.

Views Commonwealth

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to be lengthened through contemplation of the nearness of the constellation and the mythological brilliancy of Jupiter as it rides low over our protecting hills.

Commoners Work Willingly.

Others besides the runners are up early at Commonwealth. The students whose industrial work consists in getting breakfast have to break the ice—now and then in a literal sense—for the day's work. I marvel at the industry of these people, for my own laziness displays itself best at these early morning hours.

But workers are assigned where they are needed. Instead of whining when they receive unpleasant jobs, all seem to realize the necessity for accepting this system philosophically, nay axiomatically. Coming so recently from the world of compulsion with its "efficiency" and "drivers" it is good to find a place where work is willingly and well done for maintenance rather than money.

Thanks in part to the student cooks I found Commonwealth food not confined to the indigenous diet of the neighborhood, which I am told consists of pork and hot bread. Meals here, while not subject to a metropolitan variety, are certainly balanced and plentiful. A cup appetite whetted by fresh mountain air suddenly demands a prodigious quantity of edibles for its satisfaction.

Classes, when weather permits, meet out of doors. Otherwise they are held

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Communications

In this column letters of comment and criticism from our readers will be printed, regardless of their tone but not regardless of their length. The editors reserve the right to print extracts from communications.

Norman Thomas All But Retires.

Dear Mr. T.,
The People's Democratic Party

We read Volume I, No. 15, of your mimeographed publication with uncommon interest. It is an unusually good piece of work you are doing and gives me a very real sense of what is going on at Menasha.

Sincerely yours,
NORMAN THOMAS.
Executive Director,
League for Industrial Democracy.

Views Commonwealth

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in the tents or cottages of the faculty. Amid these surroundings it is removed beyond the proverbial shadow of a doubt that teachers can be as highly respected in overalls as in shiny black. Without the reinforcement of a rostrum and the buttress of a desk they maintain their position as instructors and yet in the comradeship of students with its invaluable give and take of pertinent question, observation, and answer.

The picture of a Commonwealth class ensconced on turned up boxes or rough pine benches is reminiscent of Lincoln's self-education by firelight. It is stimulative too of thought on the close kinship between toil and ideas, on the fatherhood of plain living to high thinking.

Commonwealth almost at once said in its own behalf to this newcomer that individuals with their idiosyncrasies and their possibilities are taken into consideration. Likewise they are allowed freedom for self-expression and are offered practical, vital instruction and information. When students accept this privilege and when the whole group lives this principle, there is no opportunity for the professor to deify himself within the sanctum of his all-wise yes or no.

Commonwealth Considers the Individual.

I first sensed the reality of Commonwealth's evaluation of the individual within the student body at a faculty meeting. It was the beginning of the semester, and class schedules had been posted for two days. The meeting was held in order to straighten out conflicts which had arisen when the students made out programs of the courses they wished to take. Before the meeting was well under way, it was apparent that this faculty is gathered to serve rather than dictate to its students. If Nellie wanted to take both psychology and public speaking and they came at the same hour, Nellie was not told to change her mind about the subjects she needed. The classes were changed to suit Nellie.

Commonwealth Here To Stay.

Pre-arrival impression conceived the College almost purely in the nature of an experiment. At least, I thought, this was the problem of the people on the grounds hopefully to perpetuate the idea, they were to be placed in a category with all idealists: pleasant folk to know, even inspiring folk to know, but all of them utterly out of touch with reality. Not so now, or else I too have absorbed the virus of idealism with immediate results.

The maintenance force did most to convince me that my pre-arrival conception was false. When a farmer and a mule Skinner, for example, choose to cast their respective lots with a college and work for the maintenance, one must feel that the school is of the earth, earthy. Whatever star dust may glitter before our eyes when we contemplate this labor school is mixed with the practical dust of hayseed or flour, we cannot quite separate.

Commonwealth's ability to attach to itself a maintenance group makes reasonable the prediction that it can become a self-supporting institution. Indeed the College now seems beyond the state of protected infancy with its ready susceptibility to death from the smallest bacteria swimmable. Commonwealth is a lusty growing young thing with a healthy life before it. Even now it is capable of immense service to the labor world for which it is preparing itself.

The idea of self-maintenance seems to permeate the surrounding mental and physical life of the institution until one feels in the presence of the true pioneering spirit. The fact that students are willing to live in unfinished dormitories and work four hours a day for their maintenance can not but indicate their sincerity in wishing to fit themselves for work of service to the labor movement. Such students would be expected to exhibit an eagerness for facts and for the smallest details of information obtainable in a course noticeably in contrast to the lethargy apparent in schools of the "bigger and better" type.

Commoners Play Too.

Commonwealth is by no means all work. Saturday evenings are dedicated to the proposition that Jack shall not be a dull boy. Then take place the school dances where the foxtrot from the metropolis alternates with the square dance of the Arkansas hinterland. The students are also planning and offering a program of their own once a month.

Commonwealth receives its new...